

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for synchronous media playback~~, comprising ~~the steps of:~~

(a) transmitting a media playback invite request received from a first terminal to a second terminal, wherein the first terminal is associated with a host user and the second terminal is associated with guest user, and wherein the media playback invite request is for a playback session of a media file;

(b) relaying a media playback accept response from the second terminal to the first terminal, wherein if the second terminal does not have the media file, the second terminal downloads the media file before sending the media playback accept response; and

(c) distributing a start playback request from the first terminal to the second terminal, wherein the start playback request directs the second terminal to begin a playback session of a the media file in synchronization with the first terminal.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of:~~

(d) distributing an action request between the first terminal and the second terminal during the playback session.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising ~~the step of:~~ verifying permissions associated with the first terminal or the second terminal before distributing an action request ~~executing step (d).~~

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the action request is selected from the group consisting of a rewind request, a pause playback request, a fast forward request, a textual comment request, and a user-specified internal effect algorithm to modify audio or video of the media file.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of:~~

(d) distributing a stop playback request from the first terminal to the second terminal in response to the host user terminating the playback session.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

(d) storing an internal time in response to distributing a start playback request ~~step (e)~~;
and

(e) providing an elapsed time since distributing the start playback request, to ~~second~~ a third terminal when the ~~second~~ third terminal joins the playback session during the playback session.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

(d) receiving a first internal time from the first terminal or the second terminal, wherein the first internal time is derived from a global time;

(e) comparing the first internal time to a second internal time in order to derive a time difference, wherein the second internal time is derived from the global time; and

(f) adjusting transmission of a subsequent message to the first terminal or the second terminal.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

(d) receiving a stop playback request from the second terminal in response to the guest user withdrawing from the playback session; and

(e) removing a session entry that is associated with the second terminal, wherein the session entry indicates participation of the second terminal in the playback session.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

(d) receiving a stop playback request from the first terminal in response to the host user ending the playback session; and

(e) terminating the playback session in response to receiving a stop playback request ~~step (d)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

(d) instructing the second terminal to modify the media file in accordance with a modification file during the playback session.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method comprising: provide synchronous media playback and messaging, by:

transmitting a media playback invite request received from a first terminal to a second terminal, wherein the first terminal is associated with a host user and the second terminal is associated with guest user, and wherein the media playback invite request is for a playback session of a media file;

relaying a media playback accept response from the second terminal to the first terminal, wherein if the second terminal does not have the media file, the second terminal downloads the media file before sending the media playback accept response; and

distributing a start playback request from the first terminal to the second terminal, wherein the start playback request directs the second terminal to begin a playback session of a the media file in synchronization with the first terminal.

12. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 11, further containing instructions for controlling the computer system to perform: provide synchronous media playback and messaging, by:

distributing an action request between the first terminal and the second terminal during the playback session.

13. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 11, further containing instructions for controlling the computer system to perform: provide synchronous media playback and messaging, by:

distributing a stop playback request from the first terminal to the second terminal at least one other terminal in response to the host user terminating the playback session.

14. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: for synchronous media playback and messaging for a host user, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) sending a media playback invite request for a playback session of a media file to an ~~other~~ a terminal in response to a host user initiating an invitation to a guest user, wherein the guest user is associated with the ~~other~~ terminal;

(b) receiving a media playback accept response from the ~~other~~ terminal in response to sending the media playback invite request, wherein if the terminal does not have the media file, the terminal downloads the media file before sending the media playback accept response ~~step~~ (a); and

(c) in response to receiving a media playback accept response, sending a start playback request to the ~~other~~ terminal ~~in response to step (b)~~, wherein the start playback request begins a playback session of a the media file in synchronization with the host user.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising ~~the step of:~~

(d) sending an action request to the ~~other~~ terminal, in response to the host user initiating the request.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising ~~the step of:~~

(d) receiving an action request from the other terminal, in response to the guest user initiating the request.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15 or claim 16, wherein the action request is selected from the group consisting of a rewind request, a pause playback request, a fast forward request, a textual comment, and a request for a user-specified internal effect algorithm to modify audio or video of the media file.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising ~~the step of:~~

(d) sending a stop playback request to the other terminal in response to the host user terminating the playback session.

19. (Original) The method according to any of the claims 14, 15, 16 or 18, wherein the requests are processed through a server.

20. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein ~~steps (a), (b), and (c) utilize~~ sending requests and receiving a response are performed utilizing a wireless communications channel.

21. (Withdrawn)

22. (Withdrawn)

23. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method comprising: ~~provide synchronous media playback and messaging, by:~~

sending a media playback invite request for a playback session of a media file to ~~an other~~ a terminal in response to a host user initiating an invitation to a guest user, wherein the guest user is associated with the ~~other~~ terminal;

receiving a media playback accept response from the ~~other~~ terminal in response to sending the media playback invite request wherein if the terminal does not have the media file, the terminal downloads the media file before sending the media playback accept response; and

sending a start playback request to the ~~other~~ terminal in response to receiving the media playback accept response, wherein the start playback request begins a playback session of a the media file in synchronization with the host user.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 23, further containing instructions for controlling the computer system to perform: ~~provide synchronous media playback and messaging, by:~~

sending an action request to the ~~other~~ terminal, in response to the host user initiating the request.

25. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 23, further containing instructions for controlling the computer system to perform: ~~provide synchronous media playback and messaging, by:~~

receiving an action request from the ~~other~~ terminal, in response to the guest user initiating the request.

26. (Withdrawn)

27. (Withdrawn)

28. (Withdrawn)

29. (Withdrawn)

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the media file is locally stored on the second terminal for playback.

31. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 11, wherein the media file is locally stored on the second terminal for playback.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the media file is locally stored on the ~~second~~ terminal for playback.

33. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the media file is locally stored on the ~~second~~ terminal for playback.

34. (Currently Amended) ~~A central server for use in a synchronous media playback system~~ An apparatus comprising:
~~a communications interface;~~
~~— a storage medium; and~~
~~a processor; and~~
memory storing programmed with computer-executable instructions that, when executed, to perform the steps comprising:

(a) transmitting a media playback invite request received from a first terminal to a second terminal, wherein the first terminal is associated with a host user and the second terminal is associated with guest user, and wherein the media playback invite request is for a playback session of a media file

(b) relaying a media playback accept response from the second terminal to the first terminal, wherein if the second terminal does not have the media file, the second terminal downloads the media file before sending the media playback accept response; and

(e) distributing a start playback request from the first terminal to the second terminal, wherein the start playback request directs the second terminal to begin a playback session of a the media file that is locally stored on the second terminal in synchronization with the first terminal.

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) ~~A host terminal for use in a synchronous media playback system~~ An apparatus comprising:

a communications interface;

a media player;

a processor ~~a storage medium~~; and

memory storing a processor programmed with computer-executable instructions that, when executed, to perform the steps comprising:

(a) initiating a media playback invitation to a terminal, wherein the media playback invitation is for a playback session of a media file associated with the guest user;

(b) receiving in response a media playback accept response from the terminal, wherein if the terminal does not have the media file, the terminal downloads the media file before sending the media playback accept response associated with the guest user in response to step (a); and

(e) in response to receiving the media playback accept response, sending a start playback request to the terminal ~~associated with the guest user in response to step (b)~~, wherein the start playback request begins a playback session of a the media file in synchronization with the apparatus ~~host terminal~~.

37. (Currently Amended) ~~A system for the synchronous playback of a media file between terminals~~ comprising:

a host terminal for initiating a media playback invitation and, in response to an accept response, sending a start playback request to begin a playback session of a media file in synchronization with the host terminal;

a guest terminal for accepting the media playback invitation from the host terminal, and for downloading the media file if necessary, and beginning a playback session of a the media file in synchronization with the host terminal; and

a central server for transmitting the media playback invitation, the accept response, and the start playback request between the terminals.

38. (New) The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the processor utilizes the communications interface to communicate to a central server, wherein the central server receives and forwards invitations and responses between the apparatus and the terminal.

39. (New) The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the processor includes computer executable instructions to perform:

instructing the terminal to modify the media file in accordance with a modification file during the playback session.